

CHRISTMAS SEASON SAFETY GUIDE

1. Christmas holidays are almost here and with party-going and party-giving, the hustle and bustle of shopping, decorating the house, coping with inclement weather . . . everyone is more prone to have accidents during this holiday season than any other time of year. To help make this a safe and happy holiday season, here are some safety tips.

2. During the Christmas holidays there are more cars, more people, and more confusion than any other holiday during the year. So when driving, make safety your number one job.

a. Before leaving for a shopping spree or a big family reunion, be sure your car is holiday safe.

b. Be courteous and respect the rights of pedestrians and other drivers.

c. Allow extra time for heavy traffic and slippery roads.

d. Stay alert for the driver who has over-celebrated.

e. Expect the unexpected from pedestrians carrying large Christmas packages.

3. Christmas holidays bring a dangerous combination, the throttle and the bottle. More than half the automobile accidents that occur during the Christmas holidays involve people who have been drinking.

a. When attending a party, try the "one for one" plan, one 1-ounce drink per hour. This spacing of drinks will help avoid getting too much alcohol in your system.

b. When giving a holiday party, be a friend first – then a host.

(1) Provide non-alcoholic drinks for your guests who may not want alcohol.

(2) Never force drinks on a guest. If they say "No," don't insist.

(3) Plan to close the bar at least one hour before the end of the party. Offer coffee or soft drinks as the "one for the road."

(4) Never let a guest drive away from your party under the influence of alcohol. Ask someone to drive the guest home or call a cab.

4. What is America's number one fire hazard? If you said the home, you were right. Fifty-seven percent of all home fires are caused by defective heating equipment, specially during the holiday season. The cold weather of the holiday season puts extra demands on your heating system so:

a. Check your furnace. It should be cleaned and checked regularly by professionals.

- b. Check your chimney pipes and flues. They should be clean with no loose mortar.
 - c. Inspect your fireplace for safe operations. Use a screen or glass front. Never leave your fireplace unattended. Don't burn gift wrappings, tissue, or evergreens in the fireplace.
5. Christmas lighting can cause fires. To reduce the chance of fires from Christmas lights:
- a. Only use lights approved for outdoor use outdoors. Check for Underwriters' Laboratory label.
 - b. Make sure circuits are not overloaded.
 - c. Place cords away from traffic areas and heat sources, not under rugs.
 - d. Check cords and plugs for wear, frayed insulation, cracks, and loose connections.
6. Christmas trees are another serious threat to holiday safety. An eight-foot pine can burn completely in just 27 seconds and create tremendous heat. Some safety tips to remember are:
- a. Place your tree away from heat sources and open flames.
 - b. Check the lights before placing them on the tree. Look for loose sockets or broken and frayed wires.
 - c. Keep water in tree base container and check it often.
 - d. Turn lights off when you leave your home unattended.
 - e. Never use a regular string of lights on a metal tree. The danger of shock is great. Use a spotlight to illuminate a metal tree.
7. Some extra precautions to remember over the Christmas holidays are:
- a. Make your home fall-free for the holidays.
 - (1) Sidewalks and driveways should be kept free of ice and snow. Spread sand or ice melt to prevent slips.
 - (2) Walkways should be considered when you're arranging furniture to make room for the tree.
 - (3) Electrical cords and wires should be away from traffic areas where they could become tripping hazards.
 - (4) Ladders, not stools or chairs, should be used for those out-of-reach decorating jobs.

(5) Toys, boxes, paper, etc., become tripping hazards when left on floors or stairs.

b. The holiday season means special care to prevent accidental poisonings.

(1) Plants and greens used for decoration may be poisonous; for example, Jerusalem Cherry Plant, Jequirity Bean, and Poinsetta Plants.

(2) Alcohol and cigarettes frequently in evidence at parties pose real danger for small children.

c. Children need special protection from holiday hazards.

(1) Toys should be looked at closely by purchasers with safety considerations in mind.

(a) Infants and toddlers should have toys too large to be swallowed. Toys should be free of sharp edges, hidden pins or wires.

(b) Toys that shoot projectiles or that are sharp should be reserved for older children.

(c) Electrical toys operated by line current should have Underwriters' Laboratory labels.

(d) Check all toys, especially imported one, to be certain they are nonflammable and have no lead-base paint on them.

(2) Toddlers should be kept away from the tree to prevent burns from light bulbs and possible swallowing of ornamental beading or the metal ornament hooks.

8. Don't let an accident mar your Christmas holiday season. Think safety all the time and have a safe and Merry Christmas, and a safe and happy New Year.